

STATE OF MARYLAND

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Shari T. Wilson, Secretary

BILL NO: HB 763

COMMITTEE: Environmental Matters

POSITION: Oppose

TITLE: Environment – Lead Wheel Weights – Prohibited

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill would create a new “Subtitle 3A. Lead Wheel Weights” in the Environment Article. It would ban a motor vehicle or tire manufacturer, wholesaler, or retailer, motor vehicle repair facility, or any other person who installs wheel weights from using, allowing to be used, or selling an externally attached lead wheel weight composed of greater than 0.1 percent lead by weight during the first tire installation, replacement, or balancing after January 1, 2012, for all used vehicles registered in the State and January 1, 2013, for all new vehicles registered in the State. The Department of the Environment would be required to ensure that after January 1, 2011, no vehicle in the State fleet is equipped with an externally attached lead wheel weight.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Department opposes House Bill 763. This bill would create a new program and it is estimated that there are at least 5,000 entities that will need to be inspected under this new program. The Department would need to hire additional staff to: 1) conduct research on alternatives to lead wheel weights and develop a list of approved wheel weights; 2) draft regulations; 3) ensure that the State fleet is not equipped with lead wheel weights; 4) adopt regulations and update the regulations and the list of approved wheel weights at least every two years; 5) conduct outreach and education to motor vehicle and tire manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers, motor vehicle repair facilities and any other person who installs wheel weights; and 6) ensure that lead wheel weights that are removed and collected are recycled; and conduct inspections and enforcement to ensure compliance. This program

would cost the Department over \$200,000 annually in staff, supplies, equipment, and other resources.

The Department's lead poisoning prevention program is now focused entirely on lead poisoning prevention for children and would need to be expanded to include lead wheel weights. Although the Department supports removal of lead from the environment, there are other sources of lead that would have a more direct impact on public health and are of a higher priority, including lead in owner-occupied dwellings, lead fishing weights, and food service items.

In addition, current markets are moving away from lead in products of all kinds and alternative wheel weights are becoming more available. EPA is promoting its National Lead Free Wheel Weight Initiative (NLFWWI) to encourage the transition away from the use of lead for wheel weights by entities engaged in the manufacture, distribution, sale, and use of wheel weights. By participating in this Initiative, organizations intend to: 1) identify the volume of lead to be eliminated; 2) reduce the use of lead for wheel weights by December 31, 2011; 3) take responsibility for providing information, education, and outreach to the public regarding the benefits of using lead-free wheel weights; 4) properly collect and recycle used lead wheel weights in their current inventory or acquired through normal business operation; and 5) publicly endorse the NLFWWI and encourage the use of lead free wheel weights by others.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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